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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 000921

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [EG](#) [IZ](#) [PREL](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT MUBARAK VISITS TURKEY

REF: ANKARA 226

(U) Classified by DCM Robert Deutsch, E.O. 12958, reasons 1.5 (b) and (d).

[11.](#) (C) Summary: During an February 11-12 visit to Ankara, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak listened to Turkish views on Iraq, while the Turks did most of the listening on the subject of Israel/Palestine. Mubarak agreed with Turks' concerns about Iraq's territorial integrity and unity. He briefed his GOT interlocutors on his efforts to broker talks between Sharon and Abu Ala'a, and to dissuade Palestinian groups from using terror tactics. Mubarak also exchanged views on the Greater Middle East Initiative, stressing that change should not be imposed from outside and should account for the characteristics of each country. End Summary.

Suddenly, Mubarak's First Visit Since 1998

[12.](#) (C) Both MFA Middle East Department Head Kemal Tuzun and Egyptian Embassy Counselor Ayman Moucharafa said they found out about Mubarak's visit, his first since 1998, on February 7, four days before Mubarak's arrival. Moucharafa attributed the short notice to Egyptian security concerns in light of the November bombings in Istanbul. Moucharafa said that Mubarak had waited to size up Erdogan after the elections. Mubarak had received former PM Erbakan, been put off by Erbakan's Islamist bent, and wanted to make sure Erdogan was not cut from the same cloth. Moucharafa added that Mubarak further delayed the visit out of displeasure at Turkey's decision to send troops to Iraq.

[13.](#) (U) During his 24-hour visit, Mubarak accompanied by FM Maher, met with President Sezer, PM Erdogan, FM Gul and TGS chief Ozkok.

Iraq

[14.](#) (C) According to Tuzun, Iraq was a main topic of discussion in all Mubarak's meetings. Tuzun said Mubarak mostly listened to and agreed with Turkish views about the importance of Iraq's territorial integrity and unity, equitable use of Iraq's natural resources, and opposition to privileged status for any ethnic group. Both sides agreed to regularly consult by phone and in person on Iraq.

[15.](#) (C) In a separate meeting with Turkish FM Gul, Egyptian FM Maher emphasized the importance of elections, adding that the Iraqi people should "be consulted more" about future elections.

Israel/Palestine

[16.](#) (C) Israel/Palestine was the other main topic. Tuzun said discussion on this topic mostly took the form of GOT interlocutors soliciting Mubarak's views. Egyptian Counselor explained that the GOT did not have as good contacts in the region as the GOE, Turkey could not play as large a role in the conflict as Egypt. Mubarak briefed the GOT on his recent phone calls to Sharon, Abu Ala'a, and Arafat. Mubarak said he was trying to arrange a meeting between Sharon and Abu Ala'a, and had proposed that their chiefs of staff meet to iron out "technical points" in preparation for an eventual meeting. Mubarak favors the meetings being "without preconditions."

[17.](#) (C) Mubarak also told the GOT he will continue pressing Palestinian militants, including HAMAS and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, to cease terror attacks. Tuzun claimed both the GOT was impressed with Mubarak's and FM Maher's demonstration of "clear political will" on this point.

Turkey, Egypt, and the Greater Middle East

18. (C) Tuzun characterized Mubarak's visit as a demonstration of the "increasing role" Turkey sees itself playing in the Middle East. Moucharafa said the GOE welcomed increased GOT diplomacy with Arab countries including, for example, what he characterized as improved Turkish-Syrian relations in light of President Assad's recent visit (reftel). Both Tuzun and Moucharafa said Mubarak and his GOT interlocutors exchanged views about the Greater Middle East Initiative. Mubarak stressed the importance of input from the regional countries themselves, instead of changes being imposed from outside. Mubarak also stressed the need to gear the initiative to the individual "characteristics" of each country. For example, Mubarak said, womens' rights were at very different levels in Egypt as compared to the Gulf States. FM Gul emphasized the need for countries in the region to become more transparent, democratic and modern.
EDELMAN